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Local architects honored with design awards

By Staff reports

The best work of local architects was honored last week by the East Tennessee chapter of the American Institute of Architects.

The design jury included Charles Menefee III, director of undergraduate studies at the University of Virginia School of Architecture and three-time national AIA honor award winner; John Quale, an assistant professor at Virginia and director of ecoMOD, an interdisciplinary design/build project focused on ecologically based modular housing for low income families; and Katherine Ambroziak, a veteran of top firms including Machado and Silvetti and, most recently, Michael Graves & Associates, who is a lecturer at the University of Tennessee College of Architecture & Design.

This year's awards were chaired by Brian Ambroziak, assistant professor at the UT architecture college. The Ambroziaks are married.

Projects were judged based on their performance measured against their individual potential. Honor awards were given to built projects for overall design excellence. Honor citations were given to projects based on design quality. Merit awards were given at the jury's discretion.

n Victor Ashe Park, designed by Bullock Smith & Partners Inc., received an Honor Citation in the New Construction category. "The distribution of playing fields, park shelters, access road and parking are integrated with the natural landscape elements, vegetation, pond and topography to form an ensemble of elements that have both a functional clarity and visual interest," the jury said.

n Facade improvements at 304 S. Gay St. by Sanders/Pace Architecture LLC received an Honor Award in the Renovation and Restoration category. The project was honored for complementing existing buildings without imitation and increasing natural daylight in the interior, while drawing attention away from other elements like fire stairs.

n Sanders/Pace also won an honor citation in the Architectural Interior Design category for its design of the Nama sushi bar in downtown Knoxville, and Cockrill Design & Planning Inc. won a Merit Award for design of the James H. Quillen Veteran's Administration Hospital in Mountain Home, Tenn.

Focusing attention on Nama's entry threshold and bar area made the restaurant's design successful, the jury said, and the project maintained original features of the storefront while focusing attention at eye-level for food presentation and intimate atmosphere.

At the VA hospital, "there seemed to be a real focus on the needs of the patient," the jury said, "addressing a certain comfort level for a person placed in an uncomfortable situation." For

instance, the design focused on an interior courtyard to increase natural light and expand the enclosure of interior rooms, particularly important to chemotherapy patients who spend several hours in treatment.

n In the Young Architect category, a Merit Award was given to the firm CURB for design of the Kielder Observatory in England. The design helped to reduce the impact of car lights on the night view of the hobbyist astronomer.

n Also, Frank Sparkman, who established Sparkman & Associates in 1977, was honored with the Gold Medal Award, recognizing three decades of community involvement, professional leadership on local and state boards, and academic contributions as a professor and design critic for UT's school of architecture.

He co-chaired the Nine Counties One Vision task force, served on the mayor's Downtown Task Force and is president of the East Tennessee Community Design Center.



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